

Join us at Edinburgh Pride 2022

SPN at Pride Edinburgh

We invite members, allies and students to join us for the Pride Edinburgh March on Saturday 25 June!

The SPN marching troupe will be meeting at 11:30 on the day at Levels Café on Holyrood Road. Speeches start at 12:30 and the march moves off at 13:00.

If you can't make it to Levels beforehand but still want to join in, just look for our marching banner – it will be 3 metres wide and looks like the image above!

For a quiet space after marching:

Members are invited to meet at the Informatics Forum from 14:00 – 17:00. Join us for refreshments and a marching troupe debrief! Please note that this private space is being facilitated for University of Edinburgh staff and students only. Entry will be via Robbie on the march, through the side entrance and building sign-in. Call/TXT/iMessage/WhatsApp (07905517428) or even teams message Robert (Robbie) Court to access later in the afternoon.

Note: We will keep this post up to date throughout the day and I'll try and share our location during the march.

Live updates:

Live location: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/d8d45uCRVSKGdAi67>

14:00 we're meeting by the rino head / gift shop by informatics



12:40 were by the traffic lights



10:20 myself and the banner are now in levels cafe having breakfast so feel free if you want to be fashionably early.



8:44 Prepping for meeting at levels cafe. The refreshments are all ready at the informatics forum at the end of the Parade route. The banner has poles this year so wind permitting

should be above the crowd. [fingers crossed].

Shared Parental Leave: Another Perspective

IDAHOBIT 2022 (International Day Against Homophobia, Biphobia, & Transphobia) is coming up next week.

The Staff Pride Network are marking the date with an online event:

IDAHOBIT: Becoming and Being Gay Parents

Tues 17 May, 17:30 – 18:30 BST

Register to attend via Eventbrite / find out more

See below for a blog post from Nicola Osborne, Programme Manager in the Bayes Centre, with an important perspective of Shared Parental Leave.

This blog was originally posted by the Bulletin staff newsletter – see the original post [here](#).

Shared Parental Leave: Another Perspective

I was so pleased to see Shared Parental Leave highlighted in the last issue of Bulletin, and it was good to see men's mental health month as part of the Shared Parental Leave experience, but I was disappointed that there were other parents who take Shared Parental Leave missing from the piece.

Shared Parental Leave isn't just for fathers, it's for partners of any gender whose partners are expecting a baby, or

who have a child coming into their lives through adoption. Parents who benefit from SPL include all kinds of people including queer, lesbian, gay, trans, and non-binary people, not just heterosexual men and not just families with two biological parents.

I'm one of those whose experience wasn't captured in that piece: I'm the non-birth mum of our wonderful three-and-a-half-year-old daughter Carys. I am listed on the birth certificate of my daughter, because although I'm not her birth mum, I am in a civil partnership with her birth mum and UK law recognises me as her legal parent. The University also recognises me as her legal parent and eligible to take SPL, something I am delighted I was able to do – taking over her full-time care when my partner Heather curtailed her maternity leave after six months.

Like all couples looking at SPL, it was a joint decision with lots of factors coming into play. We wanted to be equal parents in our daughter's life, we both wanted to have time to spend with her in those early months, and we looked at the practicalities of our respective employers' policies. For us, the decision was financially simple: the University had an SPL period of 16 weeks full pay, whilst my partner's employer offered statutory maternity pay (six weeks at 90per cent of pay then down to ~£145 per week). My partner did an amazing job of our daughter's first months, then after two weeks where we were off together, I took sole care of her until she started nursery at 10 months.

The world of parenting is often quite heteronormative – I remember cringing at NHS ante natal sessions at the highly gendered portrayal of roles and responsibilities. I rarely see representation of families that look like ours: our daughter has her two mums but also an extended family of people who care for her, whether their connection is biological or not. Making a non-traditional family takes time, planning and often complex communication and I think it is therefore not

surprising that whilst I know many couples with children, my experience is that the queer families I know have all taken SPL under equitable terms.

When the University originally introduced and still when it talks about SPL and SPL experiences, a lot of that communication focuses on 'fathers' not 'parents' and that has always felt excluding for me. I know that men (across the UK) have been notoriously poor at taking SPL – when negotiating the terms of my own SPL (in 2018) I learned that the uptake had been terrible (both in terms of number of people and number of weeks taken). At that time the SPL policies at the University were well intended but problematic in terms of the timeline in which partners could take their SPL – making it difficult for partners to take fully paid SPL as full-time carer of their child, which meant it was being treated by many as an extension of paternity leave, taken only whilst the 'lead' parent was also on leave. That policy was, thankfully, changed in time for me to take the fully paid SPL entitlement when my partner returned to work after six months. I'm extremely pleased that non-birth parents (of all varieties) are now taking advantage of the University's generous SPL policy more often, and enjoyed reading those experiences shared in Bulletin last time.

For me SPL was a wonderful and challenging time. I got to know and bond with my daughter intensely; I learned a lot about where my own parenting skills excel (memorising calming stories to recount at nappy changes) and where they are terrible (remaining calm in the face of crawling and climbing missteps). I particularly gained a new level of appreciation of just how amazing my partner had been in those first months and how hard that must have been whilst I was at work. I did also have a chance to step away from my day-to-day work – something that was both challenging and helpful for my own mental health, and which ultimately led to a change of role to my current (wonderful) job. It wasn't time off, but SPL was a

rare opportunity to focus purely on being a parent for a while and I wouldn't have missed those months with my daughter for anything. I hope parents of all types remember that they have that same opportunity – fathers of course, but also all the other many diversities of parents eligible to take SPL to take care of their newly born or adopted children.

Grace Lavery at the University of Edinburgh

She's the *enfant terrible* of Trans academia, described in her book as "the David Bowie of Californian English professors." Grace Lavery is at the University of Edinburgh to promote her memoir, *Please Miss: a heartbreaking work of staggering penis*, and like Bowie, the book constitutes in its diversity of styles and switches of voice a marmite quality you'll either love or be bewildered by. This is not to question the book's value; it is in parts beautiful, hilarious, and poignant, as well as sometimes oblique: a mould-breaking series of self-reflections in other words, unlike the other, 'straighter' memoirs that largely make up the trans biographical canon. Prepare, then, to disorientate and depart from the linear trans life-story, and so too the cagily respectable one-woman show. Grace, unlike *Please Miss* with its multiple metaphors, is an open book and a brilliantly responsive improviser to her audience.

At the UoE talk, shared with the laid-back suaveness of the chair Lindsay of the Lighthouse Books team, the auditorium is full and the carefully be-spaced audience laugh and applaud Grace's free-flowing sharpness and self-deprecating humour. This includes her fabulously kinaesthetic reading of the

'Trans-Woman-As-Alien' homage from her book, and her rapid onset of spinning good yarns. Grace and Lindsay bond quickly over their mutual inability to summarize the book in a few short words, with Grace waving her hand, "My complete failure to describe the book in fact is not a bad descriptor of the book." Perhaps if there is a guiding theme it is of the memoir as partly a response to the media narrative of trans people hating their bodies. The playfully constructed *Please Miss* is Grace's rejoinder, with its focus on the sex and sexiness of the trans body, as a celebration of "trans joy." Another driver is the desire to create a queer text – and therefore a convention-busting one – that switches font and tone because transition is all about such switches. The body of the text, then, as trans female body, one that captures the ethos of Oscar Wilde, never settling on one thing but expressing itself via complex and contradictory multiplicities, and doing so with Wildean elan.

As both an organizer and an increasingly seduced audience member, I sit and watch Grace Lavery in awe and with love as the talk continues. Rarely does a 60-minute talk go so quickly, a good and bad thing. Grace's sincerity, channelled through her hyperactive mind and charismatic conversation, rewards us early with her tale of a robbery of an Edinburgh McDonalds hashbrowns gone wrong, before she gets down to analysis and shares her counter-narrative about the 'transition' story: "Everything that's interesting and worthwhile and worth affirming about transitioning ... takes place in the strangeness of transition, not in its capacity to harmonize or normalize or neutralize our feelings of intensity or antagonism." The strangeness and surrealism include a darkness too, of course. An audience member asks Grace for her survival strategies in the face of online abuse that Grace is well-known for bearing. The online campaigns against her have included sex photos of her and her husband hacked from her account and sent to her boss and to her mother. "I'm sometimes scared," Grace confides. With this fear, though, is her

recognition that what happens online is a distortion of the real world, in which the hate and hostility are generally absent. She came to the UK uncertain what to expect, she says, expecting a Beatlemania of 'gender-critical' hatred, but all she has seen so far is a single woman handing her a piece of paper in a Manchester book-signing talk, asking her if 'woman' is being erased by the existence of people like Grace. Judging by the number of women in this UoE audience who are loving Grace with every passing minute, the absurdity of the notion is never clearer.

In the blink of an eye, the talk ends, and concerning *Please Miss*, there are some parts of the book which shall remain a mystery (the book's recurring clown scenes, what do they mean? I think I might know, though I'm not even sure if Grace knows, or whether she wants to know). We all leave this warm and electrifying space with its unsolved plethora of mysteries and maybe a single shared sentiment left to offer the wonderful Grace Lavery: Please Miss, give us more.

By Gina Maya

Grace's talk, organized in a collaboration between the UoE's Staff Pride Network and Lighthouse Books, can be seen at the Lighthouse Books youtube channel:

Originally

posted:

<https://www.ginamaya.co.uk/theatre/grace-lavery-at-the-university-of-edinburgh.html>

Edinburgh LGBT+ Medics Society Event: 'Tell Me About It'

Edinburgh LGBT+ Medics Society invite you to our first event of LGBT+ History Month – 'Tell Me About It'.

Meet us in Room G.01, 50 George Square at 7.30pm on this Monday 7th.

This is a great opportunity to meet members of our society and build connections with LGBT+ people and allies across the year groups. It's a very casual and no-frills event providing a safe space for people to meet and talk about anything and everything.

We'd love to see you there,
Many thanks
Zac

Zac Finch (he/him)
Secretary
Edinburgh University LGBT Medics

LGBT+ HISTORY MONTH CALENDAR OF EVENTS

This year's theme in Scotland is **Blurring Borders: A World in Motion**.

Please consider using our Philadelphia flag logo version in your email

signature this month.

Some event details will be updated throughout the month. Please check the SPN member SharePoint for the most up-to-date calendar of events.

Information and updates can also be found here at the SPN News Blog.

| Date | Time | Venue | Event |
|-----------|-------------|--|---|
| 02.2.2022 | 13:00-14:00 | Zoom [Register here] | Lunchtime Social |
| 04.2.2022 | 17:30-00:00 | The Royal Dick Bar at Summerhall [RSVP] | Evening Social |
| 10.2.2022 | 17:00-18:00 | Zoom [Register here] | What is Queer Theory? – Panel exploring queer theory, what it is and why it matters! |
| 11.2.2022 | 12:15-13:15 | Zoom [Register here] | Poetry reading with Andrés Ordorica – Co-hosted with Edinburgh Race Equality Network (EREN) |
| 23.2.2022 | 17:00-18:00 | Zoom [Register here] | Bi+ Histories – Panel of bi+ UoE staff members sharing their unique stories. |
| 24.2.2022 | 18:00-20:00 | Zoom [Register here] | “Coming In – Being Out” with OurStory Scotland – Tell us your own LGBT+ History of ‘Coming in and Being Out’ in Edinburgh. |

Other HE staff networks’ LGBT+HM Events around the UK

Webinar – Supporting transgender students in Higher Education 23/24

Feb

Good afternoon everyone,

I have just completed my doctoral research with the Open University. My research looks at the experiences of transgender students in Higher Education in the UK. I am running 6 webinars. All will be the same, just a variety of times over two days to allow for choice, and they are free to attend. My presentation will give an overall view of my research as well as identifying how you can support transgender students.

Wednesday 23rd February @ 09:30 GMT

Wednesday 23rd February @ 12:00 GMT

Wednesday 23rd February @ 14:00 GMT

Thursday 24th February @ 10:00 GMT

Thursday 24th February @ 13:00 GMT

Thursday 24th February @ 15:00 GMT

(To put the event into your Teams/Outlook calendar click on the .ics file attached to the confirmation email)

Kind regards,

Lynne

Lynne Regan

Co-Chair LGBTQ+ Staff Network University of Kent

Pronouns: She/Her

LGBTQ&A

LGBTQ+ representatives from Lancaster University and University of Cumbria are collaborating to host an open discussion to answer your questions in honour of LGBT history month on 25th February. For more information and to access your free ticket please visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/lgbtqa-registration-241128320297>

Please feel free to share with your wider community and networks, the event is open to all and will take place over Zoom ☐

We hope to see you there

Best wishes

Lee

LGBTHM/EDI Festival events

The Universities of Amsterdam & Birmingham are hosting the virtual EDI Festival 2022 from 3rd February to 3rd March as part of our strategic partnership on Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion. This year's webinar series has the theme of "Somewhere to Belong" – exploring progress on EDI in higher education, LGBT+ refugees, disability & global mobility, legislating conversion therapy, and financial inclusion. Students and staff from both universities put together five international panels with contributors from the University of New South Wales and the University of Hong Kong among the U21 network and over a dozen organisations in Australia, Belgium, Canada, the Netherlands, and the UK.

LGBTIQ+ Students with a Refugee Status

Date: Thursday 10 February 2022

Time 19:00 – 20:00 GMT

Enabling Global Mobility for Disabled Students

Date: Thursday 17 February 2022

Time 15:00 – 16:00 GMT

Legislating Conversion Therapy

Date: Thursday 24 February 2022

Time 13:00 – 14:00 GMT

Financial Inclusion for Social Mobility

Date: Thursday 3 March 2022

Time 09:00 – 10:00 GMT

Thanks and best wishes

Pete

Peter Collins

Pronouns: He/Him/His

Student Equality & Diversity Officer

Student Services

Brunei University London event

All are welcome to join us for The Buddhist Centre and the Ballet Class: LGBTQ Inclusion in Education, a virtual talk on inclusive education research by Dr Anna Carlile, Head of the School of Professional Studies, Science and Technology, Goldsmiths University. The event is Thursday, 17 February at 3pm and is free to all interested students, staff, alumni and friends. For further details and registration for the event, please book through the [Eventbrite page](#).

All the best,

Jessica

Jessica Kath

Prospect Development & Special Projects Officer and LGBTQ+ Staff Network Coordinator (she/her)

Brunel University London

LGBTQ+ History Month at Oxford Brookes University

*The LGBTQ+ Staff Forum at Oxford Brookes University has been busy organising events for LGBTQ+ History Month and we are delighted to confirm that we will be welcoming **Sara Ahmed**, feminist writer and independent scholar, as the speaker for our flagship event, **Complaint as a queer method**, on 16 February at 6.00pm. I thought this event may be of particular interest to this network. It is free and open to everyone, so feel free to share more widely.*

Best wishes,

Jayne Stuart

(She/her – see www.mypronouns.org to learn more)

Graphic Designer, Learning Resources

Chair, LGBTQ+ Staff Forum

Oxford Brookes University

SPN Book Group

The SPN Book Group is one of the lesser known SPN regular events. It is a casual book group run by the SPN (currently led by Zahra Massoud, SPN BAME Rep), and is open to all staff and PhD students at the University of Edinburgh who are LGBTQ+ or allies. We meet from 5:45pm – 7pm on the third Thursday of each month during the academic year, and have recently expanded to also run through the summer months. Ordinarily, we would meet in a pub or café to chat about the month's book, although in the past year we've transitioned to online meetings.

The books we read are selected at random from member's suggestions. We have no restrictions on the length, genre, style or format of the book – in the past we've read novels, poetry, short stories, and even self-help books. Any book is fair game, though of course books with LGBTQIA+ characters or themes are always welcome! By not limiting ourselves to particular categories and genres, we have had lively discussions about books we've loved, books we've hated, and books we never would have picked up of our own accord!

For our last meeting, we read *The Black Flamingo* by Dean Atta. This heart-warming verse novel tells the coming-of-age story of Michael, a young, gay, mixed-race boy, as he explores the different facets of his identity. Our discussion centred on our understanding of his experiences, in relation to our own and to other forms of LGBTQ+-focused media, as well as on the

format of the book as a verse novel interspersed with stand-alone poems. At this meeting, we also selected our books for the summer months. Members suggested as many books as they like, which were added to a list from which 3 were selected using a random number generator (in person, we'd pull names from a hat!). The full list is available on our SharePoint site, and members will be encouraged to submit titles for another selection in September.

To ensure accessibility, we encourage anyone who's interested to attend meetings, regardless of how much (or little) of the book you've read. You're also welcome to join just for a coffee and chat about books if you've not read the book at all. However, we do have a policy of not being a spoiler-free zone, to allow anyone who has finished the book to share their full thoughts. We also share content warnings for each book on our SPN Book Group SharePoint site, for anyone who would prefer to check these before reading or attending meetings.

Our next meeting will be held on July 15th, from 5:45pm – 7pm, to discuss *Gideon the Ninth* by Tamsyn Muir. Due to relaxing COVID-19 government restrictions, we now have the option to meet in person again. However, to ensure the comfort and safety of members, we currently select our preferences of whether to meet in person or online using a private poll around 1 week before the meeting, and venue is chosen by majority vote.

To join the SPN Book Group, and access the SharePoint with further information on venues, reading lists and content warnings, please email Zahra (she/her) at zahra.massoud@ed.ac.uk.

First Steps to Trans Inclusion; Stonewall Workshop 29/6/21

by *Tracy Noden (she/her)*

Tracy is an LGBTQ+ Advocate at the School of Law, SPN Events Team volunteer and staunch ally to LGBTQ+ people. She regularly attends SPN events and training and we are very grateful for her significant contribution to the Staff Pride Network.

This opened with two excellent speakers (Dr Kamilla Kamaruddin and Mia Weston). There are so many challenges and negative stats, but both are hopeful for the upcoming, more inclusive, woke generation. The sky is the limit for ally support, but at the very least speak up when trans people need support. It's vital to protect trans kids in schools. The only two situations in which to ask for a trans person's surgical status are medical and dating situations, and even then sensitivity is required.

Terminology exercise:

Trans is the term for everyone under that umbrella; there was much argument about using transsexual/transgender in the 90s, but the trans community has accepted trans as correct.

Not all trans people experience gender dysphoria, and those who experience it don't necessarily experience it in the same

way.

Cis is used because it's the Latin prefix opposite to trans. Referring to someone as non-trans rather than cis is also ok.

Understanding Identities:

Be more conscious of all the possible aspects of a person's identity, and don't assume ANYTHING based on any one of their aspects.

Provide a bin in men's loo cubicles for the sake of trans males or nonbinary people who menstruate.

Consider any questions you might ask a trans person very carefully; why do you want to know, and is this the right situation in which to ask?

Trans experiences:

Trans bladder is a medical term that refers to bladder/urinary tract issues being more common among the trans community, possibly stemming from issues of trans people not feeling comfortable using a gendered public toilet.

Creating an Inclusive Environment:

There are so many benefits of enabling trans/nonbinary people to express themselves naturally. There are so many potentially harmful effects for trans/nonbinary people who can't express themselves freely.

The Equality Act 2010 requires workplaces to be inclusive.

Allies should disclose their pronouns at meetings and in signatures to encourage others to do so and help normalise this.

If you make a mistake, apologise, correct yourself and move on. Listen first, ask if in doubt and always respect the individual's choice.

Correct colleagues if needed (even if the trans person isn't there), and show trans colleagues that their identity is being taken seriously.

Communicate to all staff that all gender expressions are welcome and valid.

Don't comment on whether you feel a trans person could be more "convincing" or that they are "convincing". This is totally inappropriate!

Provide non-gendered toilets.

Recognise that non-gendered facilities allow everyone to access a safe space.

Communicate to staff that anyone can choose which facilities align with their gender identity and they can use them without fear of harassment or intimidation. Understand the use and limits (eg not every trans person wants this) of gender-neutral facilities.

An accessible toilet is NOT a substitute for a non-gendered toilet.

Stonewall's toilets are all non-gender, and every stall is fully private (each cubicle's walls go all the way from the floor to the ceiling) and some have sinks/mirrors.

It's great to have men's, women's and non-gendered toilets.

Create and highlight HR policies and employee support protocols. These policies add to the support all staff might need rather than taking away existing protections.

Make opportunities and support available to trans people, and encourage trans colleagues to consider themselves for new opportunities.

Think about how your actions at work contribute to making sure that trans colleagues are represented and included. Small things can make a big difference.

Being an Ally:

Be visible, and help create an inclusive workplace.

Don't even passively accept transphobia and other bigotry.

Be visible, actively lead, be a role model (eg using correct pronouns even if others don't).

Recommended Media (in bold and underlined if especially recommended):

Netflix: **Disclosure**, Sense8, Pose, Tales of the City, Drag Race UK, Dragnificent

Other TV: **Veneno**, Transparent, Euphoria

Films: Paris is Burning, No Ordinary Man: The Billy Tipton Story, Keyboard Fantasies, By Hook or by Crook, A Fantastic Woman, Something Must Break

Comedy/Performers: Mae Martin, FOCitup, Travis Alabanza

Podcasts: One from the Vault, Bad Gay, What the Trans?!, Translash, Marsha's Plate

Activists: Fox and Owl Fisher, Juno Dawson, Munroe Bergdorf, Kuchenga, Liv Little / GalDem, Lady Phyll, Kenny Ethan Jones

Books: The Transgender Issue by Shon Faye, Transgender History by Susan Stryker, Lote by Shola von Reinhold and Redefining Realness by Janet Mock

Rainbow Office Hours

Now, more than ever, we need to talk. So the Staff pride Network has set up **Rainbow Office Hours**. A chance to make a connection with another LGBTQ+ staff member, or PG student, at the University.

Each month*, the last Friday of the month at 12-1pm, a few of our members will be standing by – check our website for details of who is available. Pick out someone you'd like to talk to, and drop them a line in Teams to check they're not with someone else (i.e. a digital knock on the door!). After that, you two are free to chat about anything and everything. You might have specific things you want to talk about, or it might just be the pleasure of spending some time with someone

like you.

We're not a counselling or support service, but we do believe in the power of community – so why not take a moment to make that connection and feel just a wee bit better.

- Sue Fletcher-Watson (she/her): My name is Sue. I'm a cis woman and I'm bisexual. I've been married for 15 years to a cis man and we have two kids – everyone assumes we're a heterosexual couple. I am happy to chat about the experience of being bi (or pansexual) generally and specifically about bi-visibility and bi-phobia.
- Karen Pinto-Csaszar (she/her): I'm Karen and I'm a Student Support Officer at Edinburgh College of Art. I am a cisgender straight woman who is part of the 'BAME' community (Latin-American) and am interested in chatting with staff and students of any orientation about (among many things) the contribution allies might make in supporting and learning from the LGBT+ community, including and perhaps especially potential allies who may feel interested but hesitant to get involved. I'm also interested in chatting about matters of the BAME community at large, including being a BAME expat!
- Robert (Robbie) Court (he/him): I'm a PostDoc in the School of Informatics specialising in insect neurobiology. Label wise I am Gay, Autistic, Humanist, Dyslexic, Prosopagnosic and have ADHD. I've been with my 'husband' (not got round to the now available paperwork – one day) for over 25years, he came with a son who is nearly 30 now.